

August 31, 2009

OBEY UPDATED ON LOCAL WEATHERIZATION EFFORTS

STEVENS POINT, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Stevens Point today to receive an update on how CAP Services is using federal funds to weatherize local homes. Wisconsin has received \$48 million in federal funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for weatherization to help save energy and reduce heating and cooling costs in the homes of the elderly, handicapped, and families with children under the age of six. The funding was provided through legislation produced by the Appropriations Committee which Obey chairs.

“I’m glad to see that Wisconsin residents will benefit from these weatherization efforts,” said Obey. “This is a great way to get more people to work in the short term and provide long term energy savings at the same time.” 20 local service agencies including CAP Services will be working to weatherize homes. An additional \$70.8 million in federal funding will be available for Wisconsin when it meets reporting, oversight and accountability milestones required by the Recovery Act.

According to Wisconsin’s plan, the goal set for residential housing will result in weatherization of more than 18,000 homes and apartments. This is expected to cut energy costs for low-income families that need it, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create hundreds of jobs at the same time.

In addition, the Division of State Facilities has funding to enter into contracts for multifamily housing weatherization programs. This will use federal ARRA funds to assess and weatherize as many as 5,000 buildings occupied by low-income tenants in four regions of the state. Both initiatives will be carried out over the next two years.

“This effort gives the community a way to keep and create more good jobs,” Said Obey. “Dealing with our energy and environmental problems does not mean losing jobs; this project proves we can create hundreds of jobs where they are needed in Wisconsin while protecting our environment.” Obey compared today’s issues to a similar time of opportunity in Wisconsin’s past. “I remember when the Clean Water Act passed and was signed into law. Opponents said it would cost the country thousands of jobs. Instead, what happened was that innovative companies like Zimpro, started up business in Wausau, creating thousands of jobs producing the needed pollution-fighting equipment for all sorts of American companies,” Obey said.

Typical weatherization work includes testing air seals, providing insulation in attics, sidewalls and other areas, refrigerator replacements, electric hot water heater replacements, mechanical adjustments such as cleaning and tuning up of furnaces, or furnace replacements when necessary and lighting replacements with energy saving components. The state of Wisconsin will supplement these measures with funds to replace freezers and expand health and safety efforts to maintain indoor air quality in weatherized homes.

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